

Project Update: April 2005

The expedition activity of Daphne'04 project was run in May, 2004 aimed at searches of the remaining populations of two endangered plant species, *Daphne sophia* and *Hedysarum ucrainicum* in Ukraine. We investigated 8 river valleys in Kharkiv and Lugansk regions within the range of both species. Each discovered population was mapped and its vitality was assessed at randomly chosen plots.

Among 4 sites where *Daphne sophia* was historically known in the country only 2 sites still support small populations including one rediscovered for the first time since 1910. Two other populations disappeared completely due to terracing and afforestation of chalk slopes. We discovered also two new locations of the species. Thus, the current distribution of *Daphne sophia* is confined to 4 sites in Ukraine. Afforestation of chalk slopes, inappropriate forestry measures and forest & steppe fires are the main factors of threat for the species.

The state of *Hedysarum ucrainicum* populations is much safer. Everywhere the species was found it plays a dominant role in vegetation cover of chalk outcrops. *Hedysarum ucrainicum* was found in seven sites in two river valleys in Lugansk region. There is no apparent threat for the species in Ukraine. The success of field expedition work becomes a base for thought-out education actions in local schools planned as a second part of Daphne'04 project activities.